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Provisional summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 July 2003, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Risa ..... (Finland)
later: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President) ..... (Azerbaijan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*) (E/2004/L.12/Rev.1)

Adoption of the draft ministerial declaration submitted by the President of the Council (E/2004/L.12/Rev.1)

1. **The President** drew attention to the draft ministerial declaration contained in document E/2004/L.12/Rev.1. If there was no objection, she would take it that the Council wished to adopt it.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **Mr. Davidse** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union, which had hosted the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in 2001, remained committed to the objectives of that Conference. As the largest development provider of the least developed countries, the European Union stressed the importance of the Millennium Development Goals; the Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg Summits and General Assembly's review of the Goals in 2005.

4. In light of the strong political message sent through the adoption of ministerial declarations, it was unfortunate that the Council's practice of holding its debates and negotiations simultaneously made it difficult to reflect adequately the ideas put forward in plenary session; a better solution must be found.

5. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, congratulated the President on the manner in which she had conducted the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration and expressed his appreciation for the spirit of cooperation that had made possible its adoption by consensus.

6. **Ms. Schmidt** (Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that her Office would do its utmost to contribute to the implementation of and follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration and the Brussels Programme of Action in cooperation with all bodies of the United Nations system.

7. **The President** said that the Ministerial Declaration would give new impetus to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and would send a strong political signal, particularly in light of the impressive level of government representation at the high-level policy dialogue.

8. She then declared closed the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session of 2004.

9. *Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

10. **The President** invited the Council to continue its discussions under the coordination segment.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following themes: (*continued*)

(b) Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development (*continued*)

Panel discussion with the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations

11. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Moderator and Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women), Panellist, said she hoped that the panel discussion would generate debate on both progress achieved and remaining gaps in mainstreaming a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations.

12. **Ms. Ekaas** (Director of the Gender and Population Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), Panellist, said that in 1998 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had conducted a corporate review of status in gender mainstreaming, which had been submitted to the FAO Programme Committee for review. A medium-term corporate Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD-PoA) had then been prepared through an 18-month participatory process and endorsed by the FAO Conference in 2001. There had proved to be considerable confusion regarding the issue, and the Plan of Action had provided an opportunity to make a

clear distinction between gender mainstreaming in FAO's technical work, and gender balance or parity in its staffing; a focal point had been appointed in each of those areas.

13. Gender mainstreaming was included as an agenda item for the FAO Conference every two years and was identified as a priority area in the Organization's medium-term plan for the period 2002-2007, which was linked for the first time to the GAD-PoA. That linkage ensured increased visibility for the issue and increased accountability for FAO officials in follow-up to their commitments in that area.

14. Gender-mainstreaming instruments and guidance documents had been developed in the areas of programme planning, budget and programme implementation reporting, and new revised terms of reference for the Project and Programme Review Committee required that all projects must be assessed according to the principle of gender equality and equity.

15. While extrabudgetary support was always welcome, it was significant that the Gender and Population Division was funded under the FAO regular budget. A gender module had been integrated into the project cycle overview course offered to all staff, and new staff and newly appointed country and regional representatives were systematically briefed on the Organization's gender mainstreaming policy and instruments. An organization-wide network of gender mainstreaming focal points had been established and an electronic newsletter had been launched to facilitate sharing of best practices among staff. A comprehensive set of handbooks on gender analysis had been developed for professional staff in various agricultural and rural subsectors, including immigration, rehabilitation and food security, and two technical divisions had organized gender seminars for their management and staff.

16. However, only about 20 per cent of the major outputs included in the medium-term plan had been selected for special attention and cross-referencing to the GAD-PoA because that percentage had been considered manageable in terms of follow-up. Many managers and technical staff were not certain how to go about mainstreaming a gender perspective in their own areas of specialization, and a high staff turnover required continuing investment in gender mainstreaming training; there was also a tendency to look outside the regular budget for financial and technical support in the area of gender mainstreaming. Indicators for measuring outcomes at the country level and gender-disaggregated statistics from the agriculture sector for the assessment of such indicators were needed.

17. High-level officials needed to assume greater responsibility for gender mainstreaming, since the gender focal points often lacked the necessary authority; both incentives and sanctions were also needed in order to motivate managers. The value placed on gender sensitivity and gender analysis expertise should be better reflected in post descriptions and, at the level of the United Nations system, a gender perspective should be mainstreamed into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

18. One lesson learned was that a proactive role by governing bodies and cross-regional support were critical to success. Corporate focal points must be at a sufficiently high level to have timely information on strategic policy and planning and the ability to influence them; they must also have some regular funds available for catalytic and leveraging purposes. A strategic alliance must be formed between the corporate gender focal points and the directors and high-level staff responsible for programme planning, implementation reporting, monitoring and evaluation and for staff development and training.

19. As FAO was a science-oriented specialized agency, advocacy within the Organization must be noted in solid data, including good practices. Unfortunately, gender mainstreaming was often perceived as a mere bureaucratic requirement; it was therefore important for gender focal points to offer constructive, timely advice rather than acting as the "gender police".

20. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs), Panellist, said that the Department of Political Affairs sought to mainstream a gender perspective into the areas which were the main focus of its activities — early warning, conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building — using the Council's agreed conclusions, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the recommendations contained in the

report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154) as guidance tools.

21. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs had clearly articulated his commitment to gender mainstreaming and expected his staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, to act accordingly. Senior managers, together with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other United Nations agencies, had participated in a number of meetings and expert workshops on gender mainstreaming and on women, peace and security. His Department, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Division for the Advancement of Women had joined in sponsoring one such meeting on the topic of peace agreements as a means of promoting gender equality and another on enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries.

22. The Department's staff had gender checklists, provided by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, to be used in preparing for assessment missions. Regional divisions also provided Security Council field missions with gender elements for inclusion in their terms of reference and, through its own field missions, worked with local women's organizations involved in peace-building. It was important to provide envoys, representatives and special representatives of the Secretary-General with specific gender guidelines at the start of their missions and to ensure that they integrated a gender perspective into their own work. For the first time, a discussion of gender mainstreaming had been included in the agenda of the May 2004 meeting of the Department's field presences; participants had been asked to share their experiences, describe the challenges that they faced in integrating a gender perspective into their activities and recommend additional policies and actions which could be implemented at the Headquarters level in order to facilitate their efforts.

23. The Department recognized the importance of partnerships with civil society and welcomed the opportunity to interact with NGOs and local women's organizations to facilitate women's participation in formal peace negotiation processes as well as in peace-building activities. It had, for instance, facilitated the participation of 21 Congolese women at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in South Africa and in West Africa had collaborated closely with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP to support the work of the Mano River Women's Peace Network and enable its members to attend regional meetings and summits. The DPA Electoral Assistance Division had made a conscious effort to increase the number of registered female voters and to increase their participation in the political processes. Efforts had also been made to target women in Afghanistan and Nigeria through voter registration messages. In that regard, although half of all Afghan registration and training officers were women, the challenge was to identify literate women who were also able to travel without male relatives as escorts.

24. The Department had encouraged training for its gender focal points and for its staff in general; in the past two years, the gender focal point had participated in gender training related specifically to the work of the Department.

25. While peacemaking activities tended to be funded from the regular budget, peace-building activities targeting women were often financed from extrabudgetary contributions. It was therefore difficult to secure regular, predictable funding for the latter. Yet another challenge was the need for Member States to provide the Secretariat with suitable female candidates for senior level positions in the United Nations.

26. **Ms. Nuru** (Senior Adviser, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), Panellist, noted that progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment had been uneven; despite increased global awareness, the rights of women were still under threat in many countries. Perhaps the problem of greatest concern was the growing violence against women and girls in situations of conflict, where they were not only the victims of warfare, but were also directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies and assault as deliberate instruments of war.

27. Noting that the United Nations organizations were making progress on gender mainstreaming and taking appropriate action, she said that 60 per cent of the staff of her Office, for example, were women. In the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, women remained the vast majority of the poor in both economic and non-economic terms. In that regard, the Brussels Programme of Action had articulated the need to build human capacity in least developed countries,

emphasizing that the full potential of men, women and children needed to be realized. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming were an integral part of efforts aimed at poverty reduction. It was important to give women and girls equal access to education and health services, including protection against diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and provide them with adequate nutrition. Other vital gender-related issues included promoting good governance, facilitating women's access to decision-making positions and economic power and protecting them against domestic violence.

28. She hoped that the 2005 review would address lessons to be learned and develop a strategy for the future. The strengthening of national focal points and coordination and monitoring of country-level responses would also yield real lessons and challenges and ultimately pave the way for a better future for the majority of women. The lack of financial resources also posed a major challenge in dealing with gender equality and gender-mainstreaming issues. The Office she represented was looking forward to working with all United Nations entities, national focal points and Member States to achieve the goal of women's empowerment and full gender equality.

29. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (Director of the New York Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), Panellist, said that the gender policy, Habitat Agenda, strategic vision and Governing Council resolution 19/16 provided the mandate for gender mainstreaming in UN-Habitat. Considerable progress had been made in mainstreaming gender concerns into the UN-Habitat work programmes, including in the areas of water and sanitation, and disaster management with respect to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Somalia. A number of policy papers had been written, studies had been carried out and staff had been provided with guidelines for gender mainstreaming in their work. In addition, in May 2004, a decision had been taken to make gender impact assessment an integral part of the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all work programmes. In municipal planning and development, a UN-Habitat-sponsored innovative programme on gender-responsive local government, started in Latin America and the Caribbean, had been replicated in the Asia/Pacific region in 2003 and 2004. The programme aimed at promoting gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in municipal planning and development through competitions and awards and had attracted the participation of over 100 cities in 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Such participation gave women much-needed experience in the workings of local government and the potential to participate in government at the national level.

30. UN-Habitat had benefited from sharing of experience and cooperation with other agencies of the United Nations system and such cooperation needed to be further strengthened. Capacity-building was an area that needed improvement, particularly with regard to gender analysis, planning and budgeting skills. In that regard, a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements would be prepared and workshops focusing on specific areas would be conducted for staff. Monitoring and evaluation also needed strengthening and gender indicators needed to be developed. Women were still invisible in data, and information on slum upgrading estimates needed to be developed. At the country level, the impact of UN-Habitat work would be greater if it received more support from women's organizations and ministries for women's affairs. Lastly, clear links needed to be established between urban and rural development, while the role of women in the rampant urbanization of the developing world needed to be looked at more closely.

31. **Ms. Imam** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), Panellist, said that gender equality, gender equity and the empowerment of women had formed the cornerstone of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Accordingly, UNFPA had spearheaded the effort of mainstreaming gender into national development policies and programmes in a human rights-based and culturally-sensitive approach which guided all the Fund's activities in CCAs, UNDAFs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The Fund continued to be active in the efforts of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to institute gender budgeting and mainstreaming and to advance the role of women in achieving peace and security in line with Security Council resolutions. It also provided specific resources for and focused special attention on women's empowerment and the effort to reduce gender-based violence. Knowing that girls were more vulnerable than boys to HIV infection, UNFPA had a gender perspective at the centre of its HIV/AIDS policy and had always stressed the need to address reproductive health issues in conflict and

reconstruction situations. Not only had it expanded its partnerships with civil society organizations but it was also cooperating with the International Fund for Agricultural Development to document the linkage between poverty and population and to highlight the gender dimensions of the issue. To build the capacity of its staff and partners for gender mainstreaming, UNFPA had issued policy statements, conducted training in gender budgeting and was developing guidelines on culturally sensitive approaches. In supporting national capacity-building in gender issues, UNFPA had set the example by achieving 50-50 gender parity in its own staffing at all levels.

32. Through a global survey conducted in 2003, UNFPA had continued to monitor the progress achieved by 150 countries in promoting gender equality and empowering women. To develop internal accountability, it had become mandatory for inter-divisional project appraisal groups (including gender experts from the Culture, Gender and Human Rights Branch) to review all projects exceeding US$ 250,000. One of the most pressing challenges was to close the gap between the enactment of laws and policies and their implementation. It was necessary to ensure that internationally agreed plans of action, particularly those relating to reproductive rights and health, were upheld and implemented. One way of improving the framework for gender mainstreaming would be to place the issue on the agenda of meetings of economists and planners and ensure that gendered analysis and concerns were present from initial planning and decision-making to implementation and evaluation rather than at the point when the basic policy and programme structures had already been set. Another way would be to include gender indicators across all monitoring and evaluation frameworks for all programmes, sectors and issues, use those indicators to appraise programme activities and to decide resource allocations and then hold staff at all levels accountable for implementation. At that level, gender mainstreaming indicators should be factored into the performance planning and appraisal of individual staff members.

33. **Mr. Davidse** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, thanked the Secretariat for having made available a useful overview of baseline information on gender mainstreaming in various United Nations entities. On the issue of accountability, he wondered how, even with policy commitment at the highest level, United Nations staff at all levels could be held accountable for integrating gender perspectives in their work. He asked the panellists to give examples of measures that would contribute to accountability and whether there should be a focus on the role of men specifically in gender mainstreaming. On the issue of training, he asked how the message of gender-awareness was framed for the more sceptical staff members and what would ensure that the training and capacity-building reached their target audiences. If advocacy was to be built on sound evidence and people convinced of the reason for gender mainstreaming by showing them the benefits of adopting gendered strategies, would the same argument apply to the design of training modules? Then again, how would one ensure that the right target audience was reached, the goals met and how would the impact of such training be measured? The European Union attached great importance to the integration of a gender perspective in United Nations activities relating to peace and security and he asked how the Secretariat would improve its reporting to the Security Council.

34. **Ms. Stewart** (Canada) requested more information about institutional efforts in gender mainstreaming. Since the Secretary-General's report revealed that less than 15 per cent of reports to the Council included gender analysis, she asked whether a plan of action would be developed to address the deficiency. Similarly, she wanted to know whether the Department of Political Affairs had plans to assign a senior staff member to gender mainstreaming on a full-time basis. Following the comments on the dearth of resources, she asked panellists to share their experiences of gender budgeting as a tool to ensure the mainstreaming of gender through adequate resource allocation.

35. **Ms. Msuya** (United Republic of Tanzania) asked how the implementation of international agreements relating to gender mainstreaming could be accelerated at the national level as a reflection of what the United Nations system had achieved and to what degree the agencies coordinated their activities to ensure the desired results.

36. **Ms. Nuru** (Senior Adviser, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), Panellist, said that at the country level there were several mechanisms that enabled gender mainstreaming and gender equality to be monitored and coordinated under the United Nations

Resident Coordinators' operational activities for development. Both the CCAs and UNDAFs provided a context for countries to focus specifically on a number of topical issues and gender had always been considered as a cross-cutting issue. In her experience, there was also the advocacy which enabled countries to examine their own legislation, constitution and regulations to ascertain where they fell short of compliance with internationally agreed objectives. At the level of the United Nations system in New York, the coordination and interagency network identified the basic issues that needed to be addressed by the various countries. Theme groups dealt with such issues as culture, exclusion, gender budgeting and lack of income.

37. **Ms. Ekaas** (Director of Gender and Population Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), Panellist, said that Member States should hold reporting institutions and their representatives accountable instead of concentrating on their gender focal points only. More colleagues were needed, including men, to lead proactively and knowledgeably, as gender focal points. First, by enforcing a requirement that such focal points be regular staff, FAO had raised the number of men serving as gender focal points. Second, by introducing the principle of rotation, it had made more of its staff gender-aware than before. To reach the sceptics with capacity-building and training efforts, FAO had resorted to mandatory training in gender; a survey conducted in 1998 had revealed that, had the training not been mandatory, most trainees would not have opted for what they currently saw as a beneficial exposure. Subsequently, FAO had moved from stand-alone gender training to modules integrated in other courses such as project cycle overview or induction courses. It was now looking at distance-learning modules for decentralized staff and monitoring and evaluation modules which would form part of training in results-based programming for management staff. A more user-friendly option was to work with receptive managers who wanted the course tailored to their substantive area of work and were willing to attend as a signal to their staff of their own involvement. While the tailoring exercise was time-consuming, it paid off in terms of buy-in and staff ownership. Regarding country-level coordination, FAO was working with the Statistics Division to incorporate gender perspectives in the next agricultural census so as to secure more gender-disaggregated data.

38. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (Director of the New York Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), Panellist, said that the Programme Review Committee considered each of UN-Habitat's programmes before implementation, enabling her organization to mainstream gender into its operational activities at every level starting with the recruitment of Chief Technical Advisers and habitat managers at the country level. Also, in order to promote country ownership, UN-Habitat encouraged Governments to work with women's organizations and with local authorities, parliamentarians and civil society at large. Apart from the project leader's responsibility to ensure that gender was mainstreamed in the document, UN-Habitat also had a task group of interested staff members who met occasionally to support the gender policy unit from their own perspective and to conduct a collective peer assessment. Whether in advocacy at the country level for good urban governance, secure tenure or property and land rights, the message had to reflect all gender perspectives and inclusiveness. Whether working at the global or country level, each staff member was held accountable for projecting that perception in operationalizing the concept of gender mainstreaming. Obviously, that had to be confirmed with the commitment at the country level to ensure equal access to the decision-making process in terms of urban governance, land, housing and basic infrastructure.

39. **Ms. Imam** (United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)), Panellist, said that, to hold its staff accountable, UNFPA was making gender mainstreaming one of the indicators for all staff appraisals. The inter-divisional project appraisals included the gender perspectives: before projects were approved, they had to include mainstreaming and address issues of gender equality and equity. Like the representative of FAO, she believed that specific reporting requirements would compel governing boards to focus on what they were doing or failing to do. In terms of training, UNFPA was working to produce a basic training course for all staff. In addition, the culture, gender and human rights aspects were being integrated into training modules as cross-cutting themes that would be reflected in any other training programmes such as commodity supply or reproductive health. For country-level coordination, UNFPAs country support teams would be using their long-term presence as facilitators to enable States, NGOs and

civil society organizations jointly to promote mainstreaming.

40. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs), Panellist, said that accountability worked best when the responsibility was assumed at the highest level and was both internally and exogenously driven. With the Secretary-General having set the tone, all Departments were being held accountable for gender mainstreaming internally but also externally by stakeholders. As far as reports to the Security Council were concerned, some notable progress was being made with regard to peace and security work. Departments were placing greater emphasis on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and the yearly reporting had become important because Member States were demonstrating that they took it seriously. Those involved in peace-making and peace-building were also becoming increasingly aware that the legitimacy and credibility of that endeavour would be enhanced if gender awareness was a requirement.

41. It would indeed be highly desirable to have a senior management position dedicated to the function of a gender focal point in DPA. Pending such an appointment, the Department was considering the possibility of rotating the function among its senior managers and discussing whether the person appointed should be male or female. To measure the impact of training, DPA was looking at the effective transfer of knowledge and skills from the workshop to the workplace. Since the indicators of impact were a function of behavioural change, he considered that the gender requirements explicit in the operative part of Security Council resolution 1528 (2004) on Côte d'Ivoire marked a shift in that sense. Also, the efforts of some United Nations envoys had ensured that newly appointed Governments included a proportion of women ministers at cabinet level. DPA had encouraged that trend in the area of conflict prevention by giving preference to projects that integrated a gender perspective or specifically targeted women's associations that were active in peace and security. With regard to gender budgeting, DPA was working with UNIFEM, UNFPA and other agencies to recruit field budget officers to be trained in results-based budgeting and would be sensitizing them to gender-based budgeting. The Department would then monitor budgets received from their missions to assess their degree of gender sensitivity.

42. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Moderator and Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women) summarized the proceedings and thanked panellists and participants for the level and breadth of discussions.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.